



Washington State
Transportation Commission

April 2015

Just the Facts: SR 16 Tacoma Narrows Bridge Tolls



How does the State Transportation Commission set toll rates for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge?

The Washington State Transportation Commission is legally required to set toll rates for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge in an amount that is sufficient to pay for the bridge's debt, maintenance, preservation and operational costs. The commission begins each Tacoma Narrows Bridge toll rate setting process with the advice of the governor-appointed citizen advisory committee and includes public input. During the toll rate setting process the commission evaluates bridge expenses, trends in traffic volumes, the schedule for bond payments, and ending balances in the toll revenue account. Each of these elements is considered prior to making a toll rate decision.

How does the bridge's financing plan affect toll rates?

The Tacoma Narrows Bridge was financed with an escalating debt repayment plan. This means debt payments were low in the early years and rise over time. It also means that tolls must increase to pay the state's fiscal obligation. Between 2007 and 2009, the state made \$41 million in debt payments. In the current 2013-2015 budget, debt payments for the bridge are approximately \$107 million and by 2015-2017, the payments will be approximately \$132 million before ultimately reaching \$172 million in 2027-2029.

What are tolls used to pay for?

By law toll revenue can only be used to pay for the cost of Tacoma Narrows Bridge operations, maintenance, and preservation, as well as the debt payments.

What are the proposed toll rates?

The commission is proposing a 50-cent increase on July 1, 2015 and an additional 50-cent increase on July 1, 2016.

On July 1, 2015 the Tacoma Narrows Bridge *Good To Go!* pass rate would increase from \$4.50 to \$5, cash tolls from \$5.50 to \$6 and Pay By Mail from \$6.50 to \$7.

How can the public share their feedback with the commission?

The commission will accept public comment during the April 15 virtual public meeting and at the April 22 and May 20 meetings at the Gig Harbor Civic Center at 3510 Grandview Street. The public may also participate in an online Voice of WA State discussion forum to provide comments. Comments will be accepted through May 13. On May 20, the commission intends to take action at the final public hearing.

For more information contact:

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